

# The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, June 5, 1986

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## Missionary sows gospel while improving crops

By Craig Bird

FORT WORTH, Texas — Barring some natural or political disaster, Fred and Sammie Sorrells aren't likely to show up on the six o'clock news.

Agricultural missionaries don't often address evangelism conferences, and Burundi is not among the better-known countries of the world.

But Fred Sorrells is becoming well known in one corner of Burundi. In the landlocked, mountainous country of East Africa he addresses a basic human need — hunger, both physical and spiritual.

Working with Burundi farmers on potato and corn crops has helped "Southern Baptists earn the right to be heard when they witness," he explained. That right became even more valuable recently when the government revoked visas of two evangelist/church planter missionaries.

The Sorrellses return to Burundi in July after he completes his master of arts in religious education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. They will be the only Southern Baptist missionaries in the country of 4.7 million people. Several other couples with medical or agricultural credentials hope to secure visas within the coming year.

The loss of co-workers is just an added reason for their eagerness to resume work in the Kirundo area. "We feel like we laid the foundation during our first term there (1980-84), learning the language and meeting people," Sorrells said.

That eagerness thrives despite some rough times the first several years. They learned both French and Kirundi, and encountered severe medical problems.

But they love the Burundi people. Sorrells, who holds a master's degree in agriculture, doesn't see himself as an educated American pouring out knowledge to grateful tribesmen. "These people are scientists in their own right — there are many things I can learn from them," he said.

"They may not be able to read or write, but their research is judged by life or death," Sorrells said. "If they



Fred Sorrells, agricultural missionary to Burundi, examines a potato plant. In Burundi, potato plants are one of his primary crops. (SWBTS Photo by David Barker)

are successful in their farming methods they eat. If they are wrong, they can starve."

Burundi farmers value consistency of yield more than volume, Sorrells said. "They are looking for security — not 'how much' but something for sure."

So he works to match appropriate technology with the country's needs. "We can't jump from the hoe to the motorized tractor," he said. "But maybe we can move from the hoe to animal-powered tractors."

Contacts with farmers and other developmental workers leads naturally into opportunities for the Texas couple to share Christ. "In Burundi talk

of farming is talk of life and death, and it is easy to move into considerations of spiritual life and death," Sorrells said.

But Sorrells refuses to manipulate people. His agricultural help is offered with no strings attached.

That witness has helped win 500 new Christians in the past two years. Sorrells preaches to some of the area's three congregations, but nationals carry much of the load.

As the Burundi people desire consistent crops, the Sorrellses hope for a consistent ministry in Burundi. They remain confident the God who called them will also sustain them.

Craig Bird writes for BP.

## Madalyn O'Hair steps down as nation's top non-believer

SOMERSET, N. J. (EP) — Madalyn Murry O'Hair, the woman who for many is the embodiment of atheism in the U.S., is stepping down as president of the American Atheists, a group she founded.

"I have headed this thing for 26 years and I feel I've established my purpose, a viable American institution that is going to remain," the 67-year-old O'Hair told an atheist convention here.

O'Hair, who played a key role in the campaign that led to Supreme Court decisions against prayer and Bible readings in public schools, said she is confident Americans no longer equate atheism with communism.

She said her 32-year-old son Jon Murray is taking over the leadership of the group, which claims 30,000 member families.

## Tithing might replace bingo

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP) — A word intimately associated with the Roman Catholic Church — "Bingo" — may be heard less often in coming years, if Cardinal John J. O'Connor has his way. O'Connor is considering phasing out fundraising bingo games, and replacing them with an emphasis on tithing.

In a recent advisory meeting with about 30 priests, O'Connor complained that bingo "orients a parish to money-raising rather than the spiritual," according to the church newspaper Catholic New York. O'Connor said he wanted to "come up with a dignified substitute that de-emphasizes this kind of approach."

Tithing, a practice rooted in Old Testament law where parishioners pledge a tenth of their incomes, would offer "outstanding potential for building a sense of community," O'Connor said.

Bingo and other fund-raising events earned \$11.1 million for the archdiocese in 1983-84, the most recent fiscal year on record. Tithing has not been emphasized in the New York archdiocese.

## Voodoo priests killed, people dragged to church

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (EP) — At least 62 voodoo priests have been killed in Haiti since president Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier was forced into exile. Duvalier drew on Voodoo priests for support, and to intimidate the populace.

Villagers, many of them from religious groups, have attacked voodoo temples and harassed their occupants. According to military officials, nearly 100 priests and priestesses of voodoo have been hacked, burned, or otherwise killed by mobs since February.

"The time of voodoo is over," said Delouis Louis in Port-au-Prince. "I am a Baptist minister, we are against voodoo. The sorcerers make money by making people sick. I told the one in my neighborhood that if she practices again, we will smash her place."

Some in Haiti compare the current actions to the Inquisition, with individuals being killed or dragged to church. A committee has been formed to preserve voodoo, as a basis for Haitian culture, world view and identity.

## A MCKINNEY VIGNETTE

### Serve him with gladness

By William J. Reynolds

While he served on the music faculty at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, B. B. McKinney was a great demand as an evangelistic singer. In addition to leading music in revivals, he also helped with a number of summer assemblies and encampments.

In the summer of 1930, Mary Virginia Lee, the Sunday School Board consultant for high-school-age young people, asked McKinney to write a song for this age group. The theme suggested was "Serve the Lord with gladness," based on Psalm 100.

Shortly after he received this request, McKinney traveled by train from Fort Worth to New Orleans. He thought about the request and

the challenge of this opportunity to write a song for this age group.

As he sat in the railroad car, he read and read again Psalm 100. The click of the train wheels seemed to provide a rhythmic support for the tune that took shape in his mind. As the train rolled on its way to New Orleans, the words and music came together.

When McKinney got off the train in New Orleans, the completed manuscript was in his briefcase. Robert H. Coleman of Dallas, the songbook publisher, published "Serve the Lord with Gladness" in 1931.

Reynolds is associate professor, church music, Southwestern Seminary.

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# Editorials . . . by Don McGregor

## The lottery vote in the House

A few weeks ago the Baptist Record carried the recorded vote of the Senate as it voted down the concept of a state-run lottery for Mississippi. In the interest of fairness, we felt we should also report the recorded vote of the House of Representatives on the same issue. The House passed the measure by a vote of 81 to 35. It would have taken a two-thirds vote, or 78 affirmative votes, for passage.

In the operation of the House, two representatives who would oppose each other's vote can pair off and not vote. Four did this, two for and two against. Two were absent. Had the six been voting, the necessary vote would have been 82. That is only one more than the supporters got, so likely they would have got that extra vote and won even if all had voted.

Those for the measure who paired were Charles Young, Meridian, Protestant, and Horace Buckley, Jackson, Baptist. Those opposed who paired were Hugh Easley, Mathiston, Baptist, and Bruce J. Hanson, Columbus, Methodist.

Not present were R. E. Anderson, Wesson, Baptist; and Butch McMillan, Kosciusko, Baptist.

Voting for the lottery concept were Donald S. Alford, Ridgeland, Presbyterian; Edward Blackmon, Canton, Baptist; Thomas L. Brooks, Tupelo, Methodist; Harris L. Bryan, Batesville, Baptist; Ed Buelow, Vicksburg, Presbyterian; Credell Calhoun, Jackson, Baptist; Charles Capps, Cleveland, Methodist; Robert G. Clark, Lexington, Baptist; Alyce Clarke, Jackson, Baptist; William Crawford, Meridian, Presbyterian; Fred Dobbins, Leakesville, Methodist; Ralph Doxey, Holly Springs, Presbyterian; Larry Dubaz, Biloxi, Catholic; Mitchell Ellerby, Moss Point, AME; Tyrone Ellis, Starkville, Baptist; Frank Ely, Hurley, Methodist; Glenn Endris, Biloxi, Catholic; Alvin Endt, Ocean Springs, Baptist; Robert Everett, Vicksburg, Episcopalian; Timothy Alan Ford, Tupelo, Presbyterian; Rick Fortenberry, Meridian, Episcopalian; Hillman Frazier, Jackson, Baptist; Isiah Fredericks, Gulfport, Baptist; Jimmy Green, Itta Bena, Methodist; John Grisham, Southaven, Baptist; Daniel Guice, Biloxi, Catholic; Dick Hall, Jackson, Presbyterian; Clayton Henderson, Tunica, Methodist; Aaron Henry, Clarksdale, Methodist; Ashley Hines, Greenville, Episcopalian; Steve Holland, Plantersville, Baptist; Clifton Holmes, Foxworth, Methodist; Jerry Wayne Hutto, Waynesboro, Baptist; Ed Jackson, Cleveland, Presbyterian; Bill Jones, Petal, Presbyterian; John R. Junkin, Natchez, Catholic; Leslie Darnell King, Greenville, Methodist; Ted Lambert,

Monticello, Baptist; Billy Douglas Lancaster, Winona, Methodist; Thomas McCrary, Columbus, Methodist; Wes McIngvale, Batesville, Methodist; Keith McNatt, Holly Springs, Baptist; H. L. Merideth, Greenville, Protestant; Ted Millette, Pascagoula, Catholic; Michael Mills, Aberdeen, Episcopal; James Morrow, Brandon, Episcopalian; John Nipper, Grenada, Baptist; Emmett Owens, Jackson, Methodist; John Pennebaker, New Albany, Presbyterian; Ed Perry, Oxford, Presbyterian; Walter James Phillips, Bay St. Louis, Catholic; Will Green Poindexter, Inverness, Methodist; James D. Price, Quitman, Methodist; John Reeves, Jackson, Baptist; Ronald Wade Robertson, Greenwood, Baptist; W. L. Robinson, Bolton, Baptist; H. Scott Ross, West Point, Baptist; Alan J. Santa Cruz, Biloxi, no preference listed; Frances Savage, Brandon, Methodist; Morris Lee Scott, Hernando, Methodist; Charles Bernard Sheppard, Lorman, African Methodist; Robert Cecil Short, Gulfport, Baptist; Glynn F. Shumake, Columbus, Presbyterian; James Simpson, Long Beach, Catholic; William H. Singletary, Clinton, no preference listed; Mary Ann Stevens, West, Methodist; Johnny William Stringer, Bay Springs, Baptist; W. Terrell Stubbs, Mendenhall, Baptist; Margaret Tate, Picayune, Baptist; Dwayne Thomas, Jackson, Baptist; J. B. Van Slyke, Hattiesburg, Baptist; Ray Vecchio, Gautier, Catholic; Thomas L. Walman, McComb, Presbyterian; Joseph L. Warren, Mount Olive, Presbyterian; Percy Watson, Hattiesburg, Baptist; Jerry Wilburn, Mantachie, no preference listed; Jerry Wilkerson, Daleville, Methodist; Charlie Williams, Senatobia, Methodist; Guy Williams, Drew, Baptist; Clyde Woodfield, Gulfport, Baptist; and Buddie Newman, Valley Park, Baptist.

Those who voted against the measure were Ron Aldridge, Jackson, Baptist; Dan Richard Anderson, Ellisville, Methodist; Ashley Atkinson, Summit, Methodist; William E. Bowles, Houston, Baptist; Henry Wayne Cain, Hattiesburg, Methodist; Eric C. Clark, Taylorsville, Baptist; Raymond Comans, Decatur, Baptist; Mike Eakes, Philadelphia, Baptist; Delma Furniss, Rena Lara, Baptist; Ernest C. Garvin, Heidelberg, Baptist; David L. Green, Gloster, Baptist; Don Grist, Vardaman, Baptist; David M. Halbrook, Belzoni, Episcopalian; John Curtis Holston, Poplarville, Baptist; Jerry L. Horton, Ecru, Baptist; Dick Livingston, Pulaski, Methodist; Bennett Malone, Carthage, Baptist; Percy L. Maples, Lucedale, Pentecostal; Billy McCoy, Rienzi, Baptist; Bobby Moak, Bogue

Chitto, Baptist; Bobby Moody, Louisville, Baptist; Harvey Moss, Corinth, Baptist; Joel Netherland, Yazoo City, Methodist; James David Nunnally, Ripley, Church of Christ; Thomas U. Reynolds, Charleston, Baptist; Dorlos Robinson, Hamilton, Methodist; Ray Rogers, Pearl, Methodist; Mark Scarborough, Florence, Baptist; Barney Schoby, Natchez, Baptist; Cecil L. Simmons, Maben, Baptist; Gus Townsend, Laurel, Baptist; Robert E. Vince, Sandy Hook, Baptist; Mack Loyd Wadkins, Iuka, Baptist; Steve C. Wells, Brookhaven, Baptist; and Jack L. Wertz, Jackson, Baptist.

The straight and narrow path wouldn't be so narrow if more people walked on it.

## What about Central America?

On May 5, 6, and 7, I was in Washington, D.C. for a series of briefings with various government officials and others that was arranged for state paper editors by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. It all started out on May 5 with a White House briefing that included a session with an administration official, who is considered to be an expert on the situation in Nicaragua.

The briefings, both with White House staff members and with those from outside the White House, included many subjects. We heard pros and cons on aid to the Nicaraguan Contras, prospects on postage costs, problems with enforcement of laws on drug abuse, the procedure for determining federal judges, and other matters.

A very interesting speaker was Edwin Newman, former television newsman. He spoke at a luncheon for the group. Another speaker was Jim Wallis, editor of *Sojourners*, a Christian monthly magazine. He and the administration official took opposite stands on aid to the Nicaraguan rebels.

The administration view is that Communists are about to get a foothold in Central America and thus we need to equip some group to try to halt the effort. Wallis feels that more good could be done through peaceful efforts.

Arkansas Senator Dale Bumpers, seemed to put the matter in the proper perspective. He pointed out the Sandinista government, which is now in control, was aided by the United States in a successful effort to overthrow the Somoza regime that had been in power.

The Somoza regime had taken over just about everything in Nicaragua,

and the country was ripe for revolution. The U.S. helped.

Problems arose when it seemed that the Sandinista forces perverted the revolution and turned to Russia for assistance. The U.S. began to provide help for the Contras, but there is a catch. The main leaders in the Contra effort, according to Bumpers, are old Somoza lieutenants. So he says simply that neither side is worth helping. He hopes a third group will rise up that will offer some measure of reasonable hope.

What has all of this to do with Southern Baptists? Our conventions have a way of trying to deal with U.S. foreign policy. Rightly or wrongly, this issue may come up at the convention. If it does, it would probably deal with human rights; and the opinion of Bumpers is that neither side has anything to brag about.

So there's not much to go on. The Communist threat and the possibility of Communist advance in

Central America and through Mexico seems to be a valid concern. The Sandinistas would seem to be the least likely to try to stop such an advance due to their Communist leanings. Would an effort led by former Somoza officers be much better?

Who knows?

The situation in Central America is knotty at best. Dedicated, determined, and intelligent people are on both sides.

Perhaps Bumpers is right. Perhaps we need a third group. In the meantime, what do we do about groups 1 and 2? There is one thing for sure. Southern Baptists are not likely to have the answer. I don't know who will, but I will be glad when we find out who it is and he steps forward.

Communists in Central America make me nervous.

We had gone to Washington to be briefed on several subjects. For some reason, the conversations kept reverting to Central America.

## Supreme Court will review Louisiana creationism law

WASHINGTON (BP) — The Supreme Court has announced it will review a Louisiana law requiring "balanced treatment" in teaching "creation science" and evolution in the state's public schools.

Last year both a U.S. district court and the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed the law violates the Constitution's ban on an establishment of religion. But the appellate court split 8-7 in its ruling, a vote that might have encouraged the Supreme Court to take on the case.

The law, "The Balanced Treatment for Creation-Science and Evolution-Science Act," was enacted five years ago by the Louisiana legislature with the stated purpose of "protecting academic freedom." It defines creation-science as "scientific evidences for creation and inferences from those scientific evidences."

The high court will hear oral arguments in the case next fall. A decision is expected no later than July 1987.



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## SBC messengers to use high-tech microphones

By Marv Knox

ATLANTA (BP) — Messengers to the 1986 Southern Baptist Convention will conduct high-tech debate.

The substance of their arguments may be irrelevant in the world of technology; but the way they go about it will be state-of-the-art.

A computerized microphone monitoring system has been developed for the convention and will be unveiled at this year's annual meeting, to be held in Atlanta's Georgia World Congress Center June 10-12.

The mike system should assist convention messengers who want to participate in discussion of business while it allows the chair to conduct that business more effectively, says Fred Wolfe, chairman of the SBC Committee on Order of Business who asked that the system be developed.

Here's how the system will work:

—About 13 microphones will be scattered throughout the four halls in which the annual meeting will be held.

—Each mike will be equipped with four switches so that the first messenger in line can register his or her intent — to speak for the proposed action, to speak against the action, to call for a point of order or to speak to a point of personal privilege.

—A microphone ordering box (MOB Box) will be located on the podium. It will have lights which indicate the position of each person who is first in

line at each microphone. It also will have a digital indicator which will show which mike is next in line to speak, based upon the sequence in which the mikes were activated.

—Officials on the podium then can turn the mikes on from the MOB Box in the sequence in which debate is to be conducted.

For example: SBC discussion always is conducted so that a person speaking for a motion is followed by a person speaking against, and so on. By using the MOB Box, the chair or a colleague at the podium can recognize the first person to speak to a motion and then open the mike of the next person who wishes to share the opposing view.

Selection of the microphones will not be automatic, however. The chair or someone he designates to operate the MOB Box can override the system's sequencing preference or cancel all microphones completely.

But the high-tech mikes won't be without their high-touch component. Wolfe has contacted state Brotherhood directors and several Atlanta-area churches and secured a corps of laymen who will work at the microphones. They will greet messengers who approach the mikes, arrange them in order according to the position they wish to take and help them indicate that position on the mike's four-button switch.

The system was a request because

of what the Committee on Order of Business wanted to achieve, explains Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Church, Mobile.

"First, we wanted to do everything we could to give the people an opportunity to participate in the convention process," he says. "Second, we wanted to do everything possible to assist the president and the Committee on Order of Business to recognize people at the microphones in some types of orderly manner."

The microphone system, especially the monitors at each mike, also is designed to resolve a problem at recent conventions — monopolization of individual mikes by groups with particular political affiliations, he adds.

"In times past, we've heard that people have ganged up and monopolized mikes. With our monitors, we will eliminate anybody with one point of view from monopolizing a mike," he promises.

The new microphone system was developed in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, notes Convention Manager Tim Hedquist who oversaw the project.

One-time cost of the system is about \$30,000, which can be recovered through rental of the equipment to other groups, Hedquist reports, noting it can be adapted for a variety of types and sizes of meetings.

Marv Knox is BP feature editor.

## Dengue and yellow fever show up in state of Rio

By Mike Chute

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (BP) — Concern exists throughout much of Brazil following an outbreak of dengue fever and signs of yellow fever in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Southern Baptist missionaries in Rio de Janeiro report.

The "Aedes aegypti" mosquito, which transmits the diseases, has been found in 14 of Brazil's 25 states. Missionaries also report fear of an outbreak of yellow fever.

The hardest hit area is Nova Iguaçu, also the area where Brazilian Baptists have their strongest work. Missionaries report many local Baptists are ill and dengue fever. Dengue was first detected in January in Nova Iguaçu, only 20 miles from downtown Rio de Janeiro.

Brazilians are apprehensive

because there is no specific treatment for either disease and there is no vaccine for dengue fever. However, a healthy person can recover from yellow fever, and some people get a mild form without knowing it, said William Gaventa, director of the medical services department of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Only 10 to 20 percent of yellow fever cases actually get the classic symptoms, Gaventa said. Not all yellow-fever mosquitoes carry the virus. For a mosquito to pick up the virus, it must first bite a monkey or human whose blood contains the virus.

Because symptoms are similar for both diseases, victims may not know whether they have dengue or yellow fever. Dengue fever is seldom fatal.

But up to 40 to 50 percent of people who contract severe forms of yellow fever may die from the disease. Death is much lower among the total number of cases.

The yellow fever vaccine is difficult to find in Brazil, and it is being administered through health departments only to people traveling to Rio de Janeiro or into Brazil's Amazon region.

The vaccination is good for 10 years, but some missionaries in Brazil are past the immunization period.

"I would recommend anyone traveling to Brazil obtain a yellow fever shot," said Bill Damon, Foreign Mission Board associate director for

(Continued on page 5)

## Microphone monitors named for convention

ATLANTA (BP) — Twenty-seven laymen from 12 states have been named to help messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention use microphones during business sessions of the meeting, to be held June 10-12 in Atlanta.

Three are from Mississippi: A. C. Johnson, Meridian; Norris Stampley, Jackson, and Al Buchanan, Tupelo.

"We wrote the Baptist Brotherhood directors of all our state conventions and asked for two names from each state, and then we got additional names. We also wrote five churches from the Atlanta area and asked them for two names each," said Fred Wolfe, chairman of the SBC Committee on

Order of Business and pastor of Cottage Hill Church, Mobile.

The laymen will help messengers to the convention use a new computerized microphone system designed to SBC business sessions, he said. They will greet messengers who approach the microphones, and line them up according to the positions they plan to take on business issues.

Twelve of the microphone monitors are from the metropolitan Atlanta area. They are Lawrence Saggus, W. G. Howard, Joe Lasserre, George A. Chaby, Kermit Warren, Andy Frahler, Clinch Norsworthy, Jennings Grainger, John Allen, Tim Hobbs, Ed Bingham, and Joe Gaddy.

## Dunn asks Reagan not to send new ambassador to Vatican

WASHINGTON (BP) — The head of eight U.S. Baptist bodies' Washington office has asked President Reagan not to name a replacement for former American ambassador to the Vatican William A. Wilson, who resigned May 19.

Wilson's resignation as the first U.S. ambassador to the Vatican since the mid-19th century came in the aftermath of reported embarrassment inside the Reagan administration over an unauthorized trip the 71-year-old California businessman made last March to Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi.

James M. Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on

Public Affairs and an outspoken opponent of renewed U.S.-Vatican relations, asked Reagan in May 21 letter to "rethink this entire arrangement," one he said is "unfair, unequal and unconstitutional." Dunn added, "We call upon you, Mr. President, to refuse to renew this ill-advised venture, a dangerous entanglement of church and state."

The Joint Committee has a history of opposing ties with the Vatican, dating to 1939 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt sent a personal envoy to the Pope. That action broke a tradition dating in 1867, when Congress banned formal diplomatic recognition of the Vatican.

## National winner named in 1986 missions speak out

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP) — David Gainey, son of Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Gainey of Troy, Ala., has been selected as the winner of the 1986 Royal Ambassador Missions Speak Out National Jerry Clower Award. The annual speak out competition is sponsored by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission.

Gainey, who will be a senior at Henderson High School in Troy, won the award in competition with finalists who represented nine SBC state conventions.

The Active Royal Ambassador previously placed first in Alabama's

missions speak out competition. Gainey's five-minute original speech titled "A Well-Informed Responsible Follower of Christ," was videotaped and sent to Memphis, Tenn., for judging at the Brotherhood Commission.

As national speak out winner, Gainey will receive an expense-paid trip to the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta, where he will deliver his speech during the annual Brotherhood breakfast on June 11. He also will receive a \$500 scholarship from Brotherhood Commission trustees and a Royal Ambassador blazer and plaque.



## Lamar Association buys trailer for ministry

The WMU members of Lamar Baptist Association have sponsored a ministry to nine trailer parks in the association since April, 1985.

The association purchased a mobile home on April 4 to be used as a satellite program for this ministry in the trailer parks and adjoining apartment buildings which will be sponsored by the Associational Missions Development Program.

As a team effort the churches in the association will contribute monthly to this ministry.



# Lee Roberts reports burglary of his office in Marietta, Ga.

By Dan Martin

MARIETTA, Ga. (BP) — The offices of Lee Roberts, chairman of the 1986 Southern Baptist Convention Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees, reportedly were burglarized according to Cobb County (Ga.) Police.

Roberts, president of Roberts Mortgage and Investment Corp., told Baptist Press the only thing disturbed in his offices was his file on the work of the Committee on Boards, which nominated persons to serve on the 24 national entities of the SBC.

"My only conclusion is that somebody wanted to look in that file," Roberts said. "Everything was neat and in order except for that one file. It included all of the background information on the nominees and correspondence with committee members and agency executives."

Roberts added money and checks

were on his desk but were not disturbed.

Roberts said there was no sign of forced entry. He explained he occupies the second floor of a three-story office building and that the ground floor is vacant. An outside ground floor door was unlocked and access to Roberts' office apparently was gained by an interior stairwell.

"The door to the stairwell has a thumb lock on the outside. The lock is on the other side and it is locked on our side. Somebody jammed a core from a roll of paper towels or toilet paper in the door to keep it open so they could get back outside," he said.

Roberts told Baptist Press the burglary may be part of a series of harassing letters and telephone calls since the Committee on Boards report was released in late April, and since a news report concerning his ap-

pearance at a fundamental-conservative rally in Nashville, Tenn.

The news story said: "At the rally, Roberts and Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., would be there (at the annual meeting of the SBC) as candidate to support 'truth, sound doctrine, what Southern Baptists believe in.' And he said while the other candidate, perhaps Winfred Moore, pastor of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas, may or may not 'believe in truth,' the important factor to consider is the group of persons to whom the president will turn for advice."

Roberts told Baptist Press, "I did not say Winfred Moore does not believe in truth. It is impossible for me to know what somebody believes in, but I did not say he does not believe in truth."

Dan Martin is BP news editor.



## "Revival at Shoney's"

Several young people (pictured) were won to Christ during Good News Revival in April at Olivet Church, Gulfport. "Most of the people were won to Christ by the witness of Darren Simpson, third from right. Simpson is a member of the evangelism explosion team. The unusual thing is that four of the people in the photo work at Shoney's Restaurant on Highway 49 in Gulfport. Also, the young man on the far right (Monty Slade) is a fourth generation Jehovah's Witness who was won to faith in Jesus alone for salvation and was baptized," says Ray Henry, pastor. Keith Cook was evangelist during the April revival.



New Orleans Seminary conferred doctoral degrees on four from Mississippi during May commencement exercises. Pictured, left to right, are Robert Bryant Barnes, Jr., Th.D., of Poplarville; John D. Booth, D.M.A., of Terry; Landrum P. Leavell II, seminary president; Terry Harris Cutrer, D.Min., of Biloxi; and Thomas G. Middleton, Th.D., of Brookhaven. Cutrer is pastor, Popps Ferry, Biloxi; Barnes is pastor, First Church, Ponchatoula, La.; Middleton is pastor, Halbert Heights Church, Brookhaven; Booth is minister of music and youth, Robert Gray Baptist Church, Longview, Wash.

## 41 from Mississippi are graduated in New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS — Forty-one students with ties to Mississippi were among 235 graduates who participated in May commencement exercises at New Orleans Seminary.

Listed by the degree earned, the Mississippi graduates included the following:

**Doctor of Ministry** — Terry Harris Cutrer, Pascagoula. **Doctor of Theology** — Robert Bryant Barnes Jr., Poplarville; Thomas G. Middleton, Brookhaven; **Doctor of Musical Arts** — John David Booth, Bogalusa, and Terry.

**Master of Divinity** — David O. C. Adkins, Union; Mark S. Dearman, Brandon; Ellis Paul Emily, McCondy; Valentin Felix Mbong, Jackson (native of Bouala, Cameroon, who also received a master of religious education degree); Bill H. Gardner, Summit; John T. Herring, Saltillo; Brian F. Horton, Clarksdale; Benny Joseph Jones, Mathiston; Thomas Quitman Martin Jr., Jackson; Gary Wayne McCormick, Gulfport; Don Wilson Mathis, Bay Springs; Marion "Buddy" Puryear, McComb;

Thomas Michael Weeks, Jackson; Steven Earl West, Daleville; Glen Allen Williams, McComb; Steven S. Wilson, Jackson; Phillip R. Yoho, Brandon.

**Master of Religious Education** — Curtis Ray Allen, Meridian; Douglas E. Benedict Sr., Purvis; John Keith Boutwell, Canton; Donna Renee Bowman, Pascagoula; Thomas Ray Darsey, Meridian; Randy Charles Davis, VanCleave; John Mark Greene, Prentiss; Betty Janice Halford, Jackson; John Mark Hamilton, Wesson; Cynthia Denise Hammack Martin, Natchez; Carlton McNeer, Lexington; Ricky Owen Murrell, Fulton; Gary L. Strehlow, Long Beach; Marcus Warren Walker, Pascagoula.

**Master of Church Music** — James Moore Brown, Fulton; Troy Keith Stevens, Drew; Mary Johnson Simmons, Bassfield.

**Associate of Divinity in Pastoral Ministry** — Billy F. Francis, Tupelo; Phillip D. Kennedy, Tylertown; James M. Tidwell, Greenwood.

## Huff first to declare for VP

By James H. Cox

LOUISVILLE, KY. (BP) — Saying he believes it is time lay people take a more active involvement in the business affairs of their denomination, Henry B. Huff, May 20 became the first announced candidate for the office of first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1986.

An attorney and active layman in Louisville's Crescent Hill Church, Huff, 61, said he would be a nominee for first vice president "no matter who is elected" president of the 14.4-million-member SBC. Huff currently is the convention's second vice president.

The election of president is scheduled on the SBC agenda in Atlanta for 2:10 p.m. Tuesday, June 10. A second election, either a run-off for president, should it become necessary, or the election of the first vice president, is set for 4 p.m. that day. A third election period is set for 7:30 p.m. that evening, which presumably will be for the election of second vice president if there are no run-offs for the previous offices.

Two pastors already have announced their candidacy for president — Adrian Rogers of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., and of the denomination's fundamental-conservative wing, and Winfred Moore of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas, representing the moderate-conservative cause.

A Sunday School teacher for 35 years, Huff has taught a senior men's Bible class at Crescent Hill church for many of those years. He is chairman of the church's deacons, is a former moderator of Long Run Baptist Association (1980-81) and a former president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention (1975-76). A year ago he was chairman of the administrative committee of the Kentucky convention's executive board.

James Cox is associate editor of Kentucky's Western Recorder.

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## Intensive care

*Drugs are just as deadly  
as a loaded gun.  
Don't take chances  
with your life*

## Why some won't quit

Dear Intensive Care:

Do you think anyone can become an alcoholic or a drug addict?

Yes, anybody can become addicted under the right circumstances. A person may have an anxious state of mind that is unrelieved as a result of pressures and conditions of life. Also, alcohol and drugs may be easily accessible.

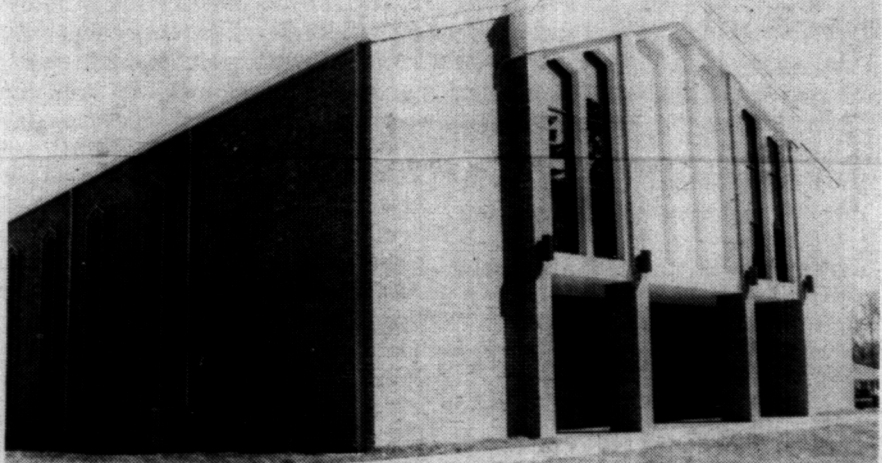
Dear Intensive Care:

Why is it that some people will not quit drinking when they know that alcohol is killing them?

There are many reasons. One is plain and simple: alcohol or the drug a person uses changes the feelings, and, regardless of the consequences, he is not willing to give up that particular drug. Another reason is that when one is "hooked" into taking

drugs or drinking alcohol day in and day out, there is an adverse effect from continuous usage. The person is aware of how he feels and wants to get away from the negative feelings. I am thinking of the depression that frequently follows the use of alcohol and drugs. The person keeps on trying to come up to normal, or if possible, beyond the point of feeling normal, by drinking more or taking more drugs.

Questions addressed to Intensive Care are forwarded to Chaplain Joe Stovall at the Mississippi Baptist Medical Center, and are handled in consultation with Dr. Ed Burchak of the staff of the Chemical Dependency Center. Inquiries should be addressed to Intensive Care, Baptist Record, Box 530, Jackson, Miss. 39205.



## Ephesus dedicates sanctuary



Ephesus Church, Scott County, held its dedication services recently, with approximately 400 in attendance. Regular morning services, lunch, singing, and dedication at 2 p.m. J. W. Brister was guest speaker. Others who spoke were Mike Sharp (deacon), Holmes Carlisle (county missionary), and Kenneth Jones (pastor).

The church will seat 500 people, has a balcony, choir and music room, four Sunday School rooms, conference room, church office, pastor study, bride's and groom's room and five restrooms. Don Gomillion is minister of music.

Mrs. Genevery Zachary of Homer, La., a former Mississippian, recently received a 33-year pin from D. Glenn Simmons, pastor of First Church, Homer. This pin represents perfect attendance for Sunday School, Sunday morning worship service, Church Training, Sunday night services, WMU meetings, and Wednesday night prayer services. Some of the services she has attended have been in other churches, or in meetings like the Southern Baptist Convention. One place she attends, usually more than once a year, is the Borequin Baptist Church, Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, where her son, McKinney Adams, is pastor. This is the only known record in the SBC of such continuous attendance at all services.

Linda Sue Moore of Rt. 3, Starkville, has been selected for inclusion in the 1985 edition of Outstanding Young Women of America. The volume honors young women between the ages of 21 and 36 who have distinguished themselves in their homes, professions, and communities.

Paul Thibodeaux and his wife, Marjie, and children, Patres and Jason, missionaries to Eastern Europe, will be home on furlough for three months this summer. They may be addressed in care of his parents, Rev. and Mrs. Abbie Thibodeaux, P. O. Box 511, Oxford, MS 38655.

## Names in the News



Tommy Purvis, son of Mr. and Mrs. Enoch Purvis of New Albany, was ordained by New Prospect Church, Iuka, March 9. Eugene Walden, pastor, brought the charge to the church. Enoch Purvis brought the charge to his son. Purvis is serving Highland Church, Tishomingo, as interim pastor. He is also attending Union University in Jackson, Tenn.

Pictured are (left to right), Olen Nunley, chairman of deacons; Purvis, and Walden.

Gregory Lane Smith has accepted a position as news and religion writer at Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal, Tupelo. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas F. Smith of West Point. Smith this month received the master of arts in communication degree from Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex.



Smith Fort Worth, Tex.

Debi Smith, journeyman to Argentina, has arrived on the field to begin her two-year term of service as an elementary teacher (address: Bolanos 141, 1407 Buenos Aires, Argentina). She was born in Cleveland, Ohio, and considers Hattiesburg, Miss., her hometown.



Mrs. Faye Rodgers recently received a plaque for her dedication in music, presented to her by Glendale Church, Leland. Pictured are Mrs. Rodgers and Edward Pendergrast, pastor.

## Staff Changes

Bill Wade, minister of education, has resigned at Grace Memorial Church, Gulf Coast, and moved to Pearl to serve on the staff of First Church there.

Dennis Brown is the new pastor of Gulf Gardens Church, Gulf Coast Association.

Jim Pender resigned as pastor of Eden Church, Yazoo County, to become pastor of Cash Church, Scott County. The Penders are on the new church field at Route 1, Lena.

## Revival Results

Linwood (Neshoba): Fred McCoy, evangelist; 31 professions of faith, three by letter, and one surrendered to full-time gospel ministry; Johnny Collins, pastor.

## Homecomings

Rehobeth Church, Pelahatchie: June 8; Sunday school, 9:45; worship, 11 a.m.; lunch, noon hour; offering taken will go for upkeep of cemetery.

## Knox will celebrate 75th anniversary

Knox Church, Tylertown, will celebrate its 75th anniversary, June 22. The church was organized in 1911 at the close of a service being held in a railroad box-car on the Illinois Central Railroad in the saw mill village of Knox.

Services begin at 10 a.m. for Sunday School and 10:45 a.m. for morning

worship. Former pastor Robert Shirley will be speaking and a fellowship meal will be served at noon. Beginning at 1:30 p.m. the Jubilations Quartet will sing for the afternoon service which will also include recognition of former pastors, oldest living members and deacons, and a brief reading of the church history. Joe Hart is pastor.

## Black church invites messengers

ATLANTA (BP) — Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta will have an opportunity to worship in the black experience on Monday, June 9.

The Black Southern Baptist Fellowship will feature a worship service especially for Southern Baptist

Convention messengers at Union Baptist Church, 291 Hightower Road, N.W., at 8 p.m.

James Adam Wilborn, pastor of Union Church, will preach following musical presentations by the church's handbell choir, instrumental group and combined choir.

## Dengue, yellow fever show up

(Continued from page 3).  
the eastern region of South America.

In Rio and its suburbs, missionaries said, officials have reported 35,000 cases of dengue fever. Two cases of yellow fever have been documented. Government health officials have said the dengue epidemic could affect 1 million people in the next few weeks. Within two months, they added, the epidemic could reach 5 million people, or 70 percent of Rio's population.

The problem is not just limited to the southern part of the country. In the northern capital city of Fortaleza, officials said they expect 2,000 cases of dengue fever in the next few weeks.

Only three states in Brazil completely are free of the diseases and disease-bearing mosquitoes. Parts of

all other states are infested with the mosquitoes or have had reported cases of the disease.

To eradicate the immediate danger in Rio, officials have deployed 10,000 workers with 100 insecticide-spraying machines at a cost of \$25 million. They said it will take about three months to bring the epidemic under control.

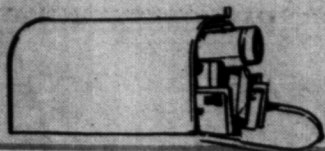
A Rio health official predicted it will take five years to eradicate the mosquito that transmits dengue and yellow fever. The yellow-fever mosquito returned to Rio in 1976 after a 31-year absence. Brazilians eradicated yellow fever after an outbreak wiped out part of the country's population in the early 1900s.

Mike Chute is a Missionary Journalist.

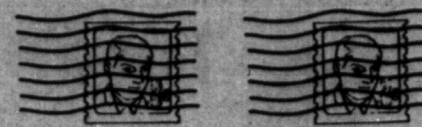
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# Letters to the editor



Letters to the editor must be limited to 300 words and the editor reserves the right to trim those that are longer. Editorial prerogatives must be reserved under all circumstances, and the opinions of the letter writers do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff of the Baptist Record. Only signed letters will be used, but the writer may request that his name be withheld.

## The Crowder suit

Editor:

I enjoy reading the paper from my native state. Usually you are on key with editorials, but how could you possibly miss so far on "The Crowder Suit?"

Your directive implies that if you cannot get satisfactory response from others, DO EXACTLY WHAT IS

FORBIDDEN IN THE WORD OF GOD. Man's wisdom versus God's.

Sometimes, there is no relief from rulings and we simply must be Christians.

W. D. "Step" Martin, pastor  
Calvary Church  
Shreveport, La.

## Ticket into heaven

Editor:

The human population of the earth is divided into two groups: (1) those who know about and accept the Holy Bible, and (2) those who do not know the Bible. Those who accept the whole Bible and follow the teachings of Jesus Christ are Christians; others may be called pagan or non-Christians.

In John 3:16, we have the "Little Gospel" where a person is given the choice to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and "have everlasting life." This is a spiritual life after our physical death on earth.

Christ stated in Matthew 22:37-40, the two great commandments are:

first, "love God"; and second, "love thy neighbor as thyself." Then, Christ says: "on these two commandments hang ALL the law and the prophets."

So, as I understand it: if we (1) accept the Holy Bible, (2) accept Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour, and (3) follow as best we possibly can the two great commandments of Christ, then we are going in a heavenly direction and have our ticket into heaven. Non-believers in Christ are denied entrance into the presence of God.

We need to WITNESS more to non-believers in Christ.

Robert S. Leigh  
Jackson

## Help for black church

Editor:

Our church had from time to time discussed how we might best help some of the black churches and black Christians in our area. Up until now the effort has mostly been in the talking stage. An event happened this week that makes it possible for our church to help in a tangible way.

A small, rural, black church burned to the ground just outside our town. The church's pastor was standing near me as the flames devoured the building. He had personally built and paid for much of the church building. This black man of God was still as determined as ever to serve his Lord in spite of the circumstances.

I know many of the negative feelings which we as white Baptists often have toward blacks. But Jesus died for all men, regardless of the color of the

skin. This particular black church preaches the Gospel and loves the Lord. The congregation is largely poor and uneducated. There was no insurance on the building.

Our church and community will help in every way we can to aid in the rebuilding of this church. Our resources, however, are limited. I am writing this to urge other churches to help in any way they can in this situation. A fund has been started at the local bank, Planters Bank and Trust, under the name of New Zion Rock M.B. Church.

We often talk much of race relations. This is a way in which to put those words into action.

Harold Mosley, pastor  
Sunflower Baptist Church  
Sunflower, MS

## The ACTS ministry

Editor:

This letter is in the response to Don McGregor's Editorial in the May 15 issue of the Baptist Record. I was so pleased to read your editorial supporting the ACTS Satellite Network and the work it is doing in bringing the gospel to Mississippi and even America. Many of us have been about the task of telling our brothers and sisters throughout Mississippi that their churches can also be a part of this great evangelistic effort known as ACTS regardless of the size of their churches. In some parts of the state, associations are operating as ACTS affiliates; and in other communities, several churches band together to bring ACTS to town.

The Mississippi Baptist Convention has an office under the direction of Farrell Blankenship that will assist any church in helping bring ACTS to town. Broadcast Services can be

reached by phoning the Baptist Building in Jackson at 968-3800.

If anyone would be interested in what ACTS Cable 10 has done in Cleveland or would desire to know more about ACTS, I would be willing to come and address an ACTS Awareness meeting in your town. There are state ACTS workers in each region of Mississippi, and if you would like to have someone come to your church or association you can contact the Broadcast Services Office. You would be wise to explore this wonderful tool that God has given us to carry out the Great Commission.

I am pleased to see what ACTS has done for our community, and I know your community needs ACTS too.

Bob Nance  
Delta ACTS Board chairman  
P. O. Box 1258  
Cleveland, MS. 38732  
843-0702 work 843-2004 home

## Prayers for convention

Editor:

Prayer Mountain, U.S.A. will be open for pastors, church staff workers, and lay persons attending the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta. Prayer Mountain is an interdenomination ministry dedicated to undergirding the work of pastors and the local church. (It is open at no charge to pastors and wives.) If you

would like to spend some time in prayer during the S.B.C. and for the S.B.C., call or write Bill Saye, Prayer Mountain U.S.A., P. O. Box 844, Zebulon, GA 30295. The telephone number is 1-404-567-3319 or 1-404-227-1022.

Ray Henry, pastor Olive Church, Gulfport.

## Right to life

I would like to commend Dr. Beverly Ann McMillan, OB-GYN, for her outstanding service to medicine and our community. Dr. McMillan, a former abortionist and NOW member, is now an outspoken member of the Pro-Life movement and has shared her testimony at the National Right to Life Convention, the 700 Club, and at State Right to Life conventions in many states during the past year. After coming to Christ and studying the scripture, Dr. McMillan came to the conclusion that life begins at conception and that abortion is the violent, painful termination of innocent human life and causes both physical and psychological harm to the pregnant woman.

I recently spoke to the Knights of Columbus group in McComb, Ms.,

where Dr. McMillan had spoken over 3½ years ago. When I concluded the program a beautiful little girl, not quite 3 years old, who had been released from the church nursery, found the microphone and began to sing several verses of "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know." The little girl's mother shared with me that she had been a 17-year-old unwed mother about eight weeks pregnant and determined to have an abortion when she met and heard Dr. McMillan's testimony and heard the truth about abortion. She decided to have her baby instead. Thank you Dr. McMillan for your concern and care for others.

Bill Conlee  
Mississippi Right to Life  
Jackson

## Prayer in school

Editor:

I taught in the public schools of Leake County for 35 years, first grade. I feel a great mistake was made by those in authority to discontinue prayer in our schools. I am very sincere in making this statement. Unless one taught first grade they could not possibly understand. (The letter writer submitted a poem, below, "Now I Sit Me Down In School.")

I think of Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it." What is it? It's training, of course, which is teaching.

I have a poem in regard to teachers going on a strike for more pay. Think about it. What if God went on a strike? Oh! If the love Jesus had could abide in every heart. In Mark 10:13-14-15 we read where Jesus rebuked those who brought little children to him, and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." It seems that the dollar is foremost. I put the children first, as it should be.

### Now I Sit Me Down In School

Now I sit me down in school  
Where praying is against the rule,  
For this great nation under God  
Finds public mention of Him odd.  
Any prayer a class recites  
Now violates the Bill of Rights.  
Any time my head I bow  
Becomes a Federal matter now.  
Teach us of stars, of pole and equator  
But make no mention of this Creator;  
Tell of exports in Denmark and  
Sweden

But not a word of what Eve did in  
Eden.

The law is specific, the law is precise:

Praying out loud is no longer nice;  
Praying aloud in a public hall  
Upsets believers in nothing at all.  
In silence alone can we meditate  
And if God gets the credit . . . great!  
This rule, however, has a gimmick in it:

You've got to be finished in less than  
a minute;

So all I ask is a minute of quiet  
If I feel like praying, then maybe I'll  
try it;

If not, oh Lord, this plea I make,  
If I die in school, my soul you'll take!

Mrs. F. N. Rives  
Lena

I do not disagree with you in that I also feel that we need to be able to teach creationism in public school, particularly if evolution is to be taught. I also do not disagree with you in that I also feel that children should be allowed to pray in school. What I must say, however, is that the Supreme Court has never tried to stop children from praying in school nor, indeed, have they stopped such a practice. There is no power on earth that can stop a child from praying when and where he wants to.

What the Supreme Court did was to tell governments and school administrators and teachers that they could not tell a child that he had to pray and what he had to pray about. The problem is that many people in authority have misinterpreted that ruling and have tried to eliminate prayer altogether. Students can come into the school buildings and pray as long as they initiate the prayer themselves and no school authority regiments it in any way and as long as it doesn't interfere with school duties. — Editor

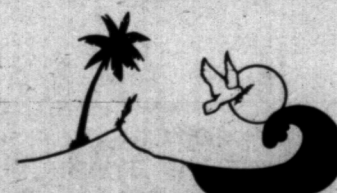
## Messenger responsibility

In the U.S. District Court in Atlanta, in the May 5th ruling in the case of Crowder et al vs. SBC et al the District Judge stated only: "... the court holds that this dispute is one involving questions of internal church affairs over which this court has no jurisdiction." This is a far cry from President Stanley's reported comments that he knew all along that his rulings in Dallas were correct. The court did not consider the rightness or the wrongness of any rulings in Dallas.

So what effect does the Court's ruling have on our 1986 Convention? None. As is true in every Convention, the responsibility for upholding our Bylaws is shared by the Chair and the Messengers. It is important for Messengers to realize that any perceived infraction of our Bylaws must be corrected on the floor of the Convention when it occurs, or it will not be corrected at all.

Should the chair, for whatever reason, rule or act in a manner contrary to our Bylaws, the Messengers have a duty to themselves and to the churches from which they come to insist, in a loving spirit, upon adherence to the Bylaws, which are our guarantee of religious freedom. This is done by a Messenger rising to a Point of Order at once. This does not require a second. (Roberts Rules, Sect. 23). If necessary because of the Chair's ruling on the Point of Order, Messenger must make an Appeal from the Ruling of the Chair at once. This does require a second. (Roberts Rules, Sect. 24) But remember, the time to do either of these is when the infraction is perceived to have occurred. The first Messenger to get an open microphone is the one to do either of these, when appropriate.

Robert S. Crowder  
Birmingham, Ala.



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## Mississippi Baptist activities

June 10-12 Southern Baptist Convention, Atlanta, Georgia



## Faces And Places

by anne washburn mcwilliams



Huston Leach

## Ten years after the crash

The Alaska Airlines 727 hit some spruce stumps and a rocky cliff at the end of the Juneau runway. It broke into three sections and burned.

The crew and all 49 passengers lived but one, an 85-year-old woman. Baptist preachers on the passenger list had been in Alaska to preach in revivals, accompanied by their wives. (Danny Hood, a Clarke College graduate, was among them.)

"It must have been the Lord's will for us to live," says the second officer on that flight of ten years ago, April 5, 1976. Huston Leach lives at Conehatta. He is treasurer for the Newton County Baptist Association and treasurer for Sulphur Springs Baptist Church, where he is a member.

Leach was, probably, the most seriously injured person on the plane. Fusion in his spine has left him in a wheelchair, with no feeling from just below his knees down. But he isn't complaining. He's glad to be alive.

As the plane was going down, he recalls, "I didn't see a chance that any of us could survive. It was a miracle."

The Juneau airport, built on an island, at that time was fairly new. Bad weather the day of the crash caused the airliner to be put into a holding pattern. When the pilot got the signal to land, he started down, but because the weather was still so rough, he hesitated and, just for a moment, put the plane in reverse. "Once you put it in reverse, you can't change your mind. You have to land," said Leach. And they were coming in too fast. The pilot was trying to pull back and get airborne again, and might have made it had the plane not grazed the rocks and stumps not yet moved away from the new field. The right wing and two engines broke off. The other wing tore. The main section broke up and caught fire.

Helicopters and Coast Guard came to the rescue, and the passengers got out. In the cockpit section, the captain had a crushed ankle and the first officer a head injury. Both were unconscious. Because of his injured back, Leach could not move. He could hear flames coming closer and closer. The one fire truck available did not do any good, for it soon ran out of water. Finally, a Coast Guard man got a win-

dow broken with a rock so Leach could be pulled through. He didn't see how they could rescue the other two, but someone managed to get them over an escape hatch where they could fall through. Just as the last one fell out, the cockpit exploded.

Up to the time of the crash, Leach had chalked 12,000 hours of total flying time. Besides ten years with Alaska Airlines, he had been in the Air Force for four years during the Korean War and then had been flight engineer in the Air National Guard. If he were still flying, he could now be a senior captain on a 727.

Leach grew up at Conehatta. While in the Air Force and stationed in Texas, he met and married a nurse, Billie Robertson. She was then in nursing school at Wichita Falls. His daughter, Karen Tune, is married and lives in Newton, and has two daughters of her own.

While Leach worked for Alaska Airlines, he and his family lived in Seattle, but built a house at Conehatta near his mother as a second home. After the crash, they moved to the Conehatta house.

The accident didn't succeed in keeping him on the ground. His wife got her flying license. He bought his own plane, a Piper Warrior, and later a Piper Archer. In 1984 they made a flying trip to the northwest.

Photography and reading are among his interests. But he doesn't have too much time for reading, he says, since he's been keeping books for the Newton Association. His work must be done properly, for it will be audited. Charles Melton, Newton director of missions, asked him last November to take on that job, which he can do at home.

Despite the wheelchair, he is still active in many roles. A short time ago, a forest fire almost caught up with him, and painfully burned one of his arms.

He escaped from a forest fire and a plane crash. His salvation through faith came earlier, in 1958, he recalls, when he was living in Jackson. Van Winkle Church was holding a revival. The pastor, Herman Milner, and the evangelist came to his house to talk with him, and he decided that night to place his trust in Christ.

Thursday, June 5, 1986

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 7

# Stanley will permit one-by-one challenges

By Dan Martin

ATLANTA (BP) — One-by-one challenges to nominees for the Southern Baptist Convention Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees will be allowed at the 1986 annual meeting, according to SBC President Charles F. Stanley.

Stanley, pastor of First Church, Atlanta, told Baptist Press he intends to allow challenges on an individual basis but will rule alternate slates out of order, regardless of what messengers decide to do about changing Bylaw 16, at the annual meeting, scheduled June 10-12 in the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta.

The SBC Executive Committee has recommended Bylaw 16 be changed, adding wording to allow one-by-one challenges but prohibiting substitution of alternate slates. The action is scheduled early in the business of the convention, prior to the election of the Committee on Boards. To be adopted, the amendment must be favored by two-thirds of the messengers present and voting.

Under SBC bylaws, the president appoints the 54-member Committee on Committees, which nominates two persons from each of the 27 qualified state conventions to serve on the Committee on Boards. The Committee on Boards, in turn, nominates persons to serve on the 26 national agencies of the SBC.

The sequence, starting with the election of a president and ending with nominees to boards of trust, has been at the center of the seven-year struggle in the 14.4-million-member denomination between those who want to change the denomination to a more conservative direction and others who wish to see it continue as

it has been.

In Dallas, Stanley ruled challenges to the Committee on Committees' nominations must be one-by-one, disallowing the substitution of an alternate slate. His ruling was overturned by messengers, 12,576 (51.59 percent) to 11,801 (48.41 percent).

Stanley, however, following the advice of parliamentarian Wayne Allen of Memphis, Tenn., ruled any attempt to alter the committee nominations out of order and moved on to a vote on the original slate of nominees. The slate was elected, 13,123 (57.8 percent) to 9,581 (42.2 percent).

The ruling was the center of a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court which sought to have the Committee on Boards election declared invalid, to have the court interpret the bylaws of the SBC and to issue an injunction to prevent a similar ruling in 1986.

U.S. District Judge Robert Hall, however, ruled in favor of the SBC and its Executive Committee, saying the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibited him from interfering in internal church matters. The court did not deal with the merits of the case, noting whether the rulings "were correct or patently incorrect is irrelevant . . ."

Stanley named as an auxiliary parliamentarians Joe Reynolds, a member of Second Church, Houston and Dan Collins, a member of Brushy Creek Church, Taylors, S.C.

Reynolds is founder and senior director of Reynolds, Allen & Cook, a law firm with offices in Houston, Austin, and Washington. He is vice president of the board of regents at Texas A & M University, past president of the Lawyers Society of

Houston and a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers. He is a Sunday School teacher and deacon at the Houston church.

Collins has his own corporate and tax law firm in Greenville, S.C. He recently transferred his church membership from First Church, Taylors, where he was a deacon and Sunday School teacher, to Brushy Creek Church. Collins also has been nominated by the 1986 Committee on Boards to be a trustee of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

"I discussed the matter with Jimmy (Draper) and John (Sullivan) and we are all agreed that if someone wants to make a nomination for some

(Continued on page 10)

## MBMC copter crashes; 3 dead

Three men were killed Monday evening when the Mississippi Baptist Medical Center's aeromedical helicopter crashed into the Black Warrior River northeast of Tuscaloosa, Ala.

The victims included two flight nurses and the pilot. The nurses were Mark C. Applewhite, 31, a native of Hazlehurst, and Mark (Steve) Moreland, 32, a native of Tupelo. The pilot was John Coyle, 28, who was from England.

The helicopter, which has been used by the medical center since last July, was returning to Jackson from Birmingham's University of Alabama Medical Center.

Cause of the crash was not known.

## Ten from state receive degrees from Mid-America

Of the 50 Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary graduates for May 9, 1986, the following were from Mississippi.

MASTER OF DIVINITY: James W. Derryberry, son of Bill and Jean Derryberry of Potts Camp, and pastor of First Church, Hickory Flat; Robert Wayne Duncan, associate pastor of Victoria Heights Church in Victoria; Clarence Hendricks, graduate of Blue Mountain College and pastor of Lebanon Church, Ripley; Mark Anthony Wells Ludlow, pastor of Hickory Grove, Coldwater; Gregory Geeslin

Moore, son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Moore of Grenada, and graduate of Mississippi College; Malcolm Eugene Norris, resides in Southaven; Benjamin A. Riley, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Riley of Jackson, and graduate of Mississippi College.

ASSOCIATE OF DIVINITY: Terry Lee Birchwell, resides in Horn Lake; Michael W. Mallatt, pastor of Darlowe Church, Hollandale.

DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY: David Guyton Shackelford, born in Holly Springs, pastor of Oakhaven Church, Memphis, Tenn.

## Mississippians earn degrees from Southern Seminary

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Four students from Mississippi were among 350 awarded degrees from Southern Seminary during the school's 157th commencement May 23.

Catherine Allen, associate executive director, Woman's Missionary Union, delivered the commencement address.

Mississippi graduates included the following: Master of Divinity — William Dennis Jones of Waynesboro; Master of Social Work — Kimberly L. Myers of Brandon; Doctor of Ministry — Robert A. Holifield of Laurel; Master of Theology — Robert E. Gwaltney of Coldwater.



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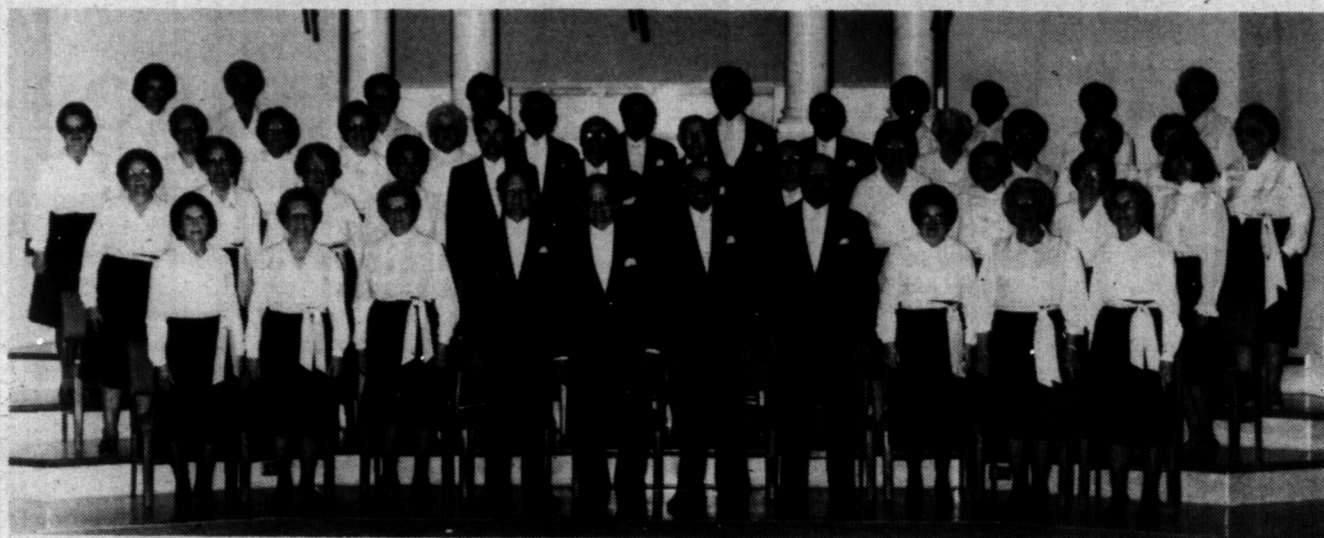
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## Senior Adult Corner



### Mature Notes and 49-Plus present musical

The Mature Notes Senior Adult Choir of First Church, Quitman, under direction of Wayne Baggett and accompanied by Donna Dabbs, joined together with the Forty-Nine Plus Club of First Church, Waynesboro, under direction of Wayne Meeks, to present the musical, "More Than Ever Before," on May 18, at First Church, Quitman. On May 25, the combined choirs presented the musical at First Church, Waynesboro.

Both choirs participated in the Fifth Annual Springtime Praise for Senior Adults in Gatlinburg, Tenn., May 26-29. They also accepted an invitation from Carl Mays of Creative Ministries, Inc. to be the featured performers on the program Tuesday evening, May 27.

"More Than Ever Before" has story and drama by R. G. Huff, lyrics by Bill Sloane, and music by Barry

Braman. The entire musical conveys the idea that senior adults have had opportunity to gain wisdom as they realize it is a gift from God and it comes when one seeks to know and follow God's word.

Members of Mature Notes are: Maxine Adams, Gladys Akins, Mildred Alman, Buddy Barry, Margarette Barry, W. H. Bealle, Lola Burt, Leonard Byrd, Virginia Byrd, Frances Castleman, Fred Castleman, Donna Dabbs, G. F. Dabbs, Jr., Lois Dabbs, Sarah Jo Dabbs, Myra Daniels, Gracie Pearl Dansby, Leana Fairchild, Orville Fairchild, Vera Fuller, Katherine Glass, Trucy Goldman, J. C. Grayson, Joyce Grayson, Leavy Green, Elmer Guy, Evelyn Guy, D. W. Hardee, Sr., Elizabeth Hardee, Minnie Hurst, Edris Ivy, Mildred Ivy, Earnestine Kamper, Mildred Loper, Frances

Lucas, Irene Martin, C. M. Mott, Mable Mott, Earl Mzingo, Irene Mzingo, Ethel Riley, Mirian Riley, C. E. Sellers, Earnestine Sellers, Eula Shirley, and Lila Slay.

Members of the Forty-Nine Plus Club are Bobbie Almond, John Almond, Dot Blackledge, Bernice Byrd, M. L. Clanton, Myrtle Cooley, Geneva Dabbs, Robbie Davis, Dora Dickerson, Nell Gardner, Buster Gordon, Grace Gordon, Iva M. Graham, John Hobdy, Mary John Hobdy, Albert R. Jones, Helen Jones, Ocie Jones, Waverly McIlwain, Sybil Martin, Faye Odom, Decell Odom, Nina Robinson, Scott Robinson, Ena Saul, Etoile Scott, John H. Scott, Randy Stanley, Mary Catherine Stanley, Pearl Smith, Izetta Snowe, Lois M. Stagg, Mary Pearl Strickland, Nelda Stuart, Bert Thomas, Mary Lowe Vaughn, Ann Walley, Eletha Walley, Johnnie White, and W. P. Young.

### Devotional

## The great invitation

By Dan Thompson  
Matthew 11:28

Some of the most beautiful words in the scriptures are those of Jesus when he invites those with heavy burdens to come to him by saying, "Come unto me ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Two things quickly come to mind when we consider the invitation.

I. Its magnitude. The invitation is often referred to as the great invitation. We can readily think of several reasons why this is true.

The PERSON who extends the invitation is Jesus. It is not just an ordinary person, or even an outstanding person, but Jesus, the divine Son of God, who came down from heaven to seek and to save that which was lost. He is often referred to as "King of Kings" and "Lord of Lords," thus making it a royal invitation.

The CONDITION of those invited makes it great. All those who labor and are heavy laden are addressed. Labor first suggests those who work hard at a task. But here it reflects the person who labors under a heavy load of guilt because of sin — so heavy that it weighs one down. The invitation reaches out to those needs which are the greatest.

The DIRECTION is suggested by the words "come unto me" — not a suggested ritualism, but a move toward a person, to have a personal encounter with Jesus, who alone can meet the needs of the heart.

The OBJECTIVE is clearly stated when the word "rest" is used. It surely expresses a sweet release found when one is relieved of a heavy burden. Cleansing and forgiveness of sin bring a satisfying peace to the heart and joy floods the soul in the realization that sins are gone.

Its SCOPE makes it great, and the word "all" reminds us that none are excluded from God's provisions of salvation in Christ Jesus.

II. Its meaning. By its very nature the invitation means "welcome." You are invited to come — even urged to come. It means "choice" in the sense that it is not a command, but an invitation. One chooses by accepting or rejecting. It means "submission," for Jesus mentions taking "my yoke." It calls for surrender to Jesus as Saviour and Lord, and results in forgiveness and new life of discipleship following Jesus. It is truly The Great Invitation!

Dan Thompson is pastor, Harperville Church.



Thompson

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### Washington Association builds new building

Washington Baptist Association held ground breaking services for its new building, May 3 and construction started the following week.

The building will have 2400 sq. feet and will include two offices, a work room, media storage room, several closets, two bathrooms, a small conference room and a large conference room.

"Washington Association sold its old building in Greenville for \$119,000 and this money is being used to buy the land and build the new building. The new associational building will be located at 1431 South Colorado, Greenville," says Roy D. Raddin, director of missions.

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# '20s buildings smashed to make room for new

By Mark Leggett

Two buildings from the 1920s were demolished at Tupelo's First Baptist Church to make room for a new \$1.4 million building.

The buildings, which survived the 1936 tornado, were originally heated with coal-fired fireplaces.

A two-story education building for older youth and adults is planned for the site, said Bart Latner, minister of education.

"Our design will tie in with the architecture of the rest of the church building to blend in with what is a historic building for Tupelo," said architect A. J. Staub III.

"The plan is to build without borrowing; that's the pastor's goal," said Latner. More than \$1.6 million has been pledged toward the construction of the building.

The ultimate goal is \$1.8 million, which would allow for several other projects, Latner said.

"We've got \$500,000 in cash — a pretty good start," said Latner, from the temporary church offices at the Tennessee Valley Authority building on

North Gloster Street. New church offices will be located in the 18,000 square foot building.

Renovations to the church's basement, balcony, a new elevator, and the purchase of an organ are also scheduled. Approximately 160 seats will be added to the sanctuary with renovations to the balcony. A choir suite is planned for the basement.

The education building will be equipped with movable partitions to allow for groups from 20 to 75, Latner said. The church has 1,300 members and an average Sunday School attendance of 550.

First Baptist, Tupelo, was formed in 1850 as Hickory Grove Baptist Church, meeting on the Mount Vernon Road. The church's first building in Tupelo was built in 1861 and the two buildings demolished recently were built in 1927 and 1929.

The 1936 tornado destroyed the sanctuary and in 1950 the building was again destroyed, this time by fire.

Mark Leggett is staff writer, Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal.



## White Oak (Smith) dedicates pastorium

White Oak Church, Smith Association, recently dedicated its new pastorium. Earl Kelly, executive secretary, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, was guest minister. Following the 11 a.m. service, a meal was served.

At 1:30 the congregation assembled on the drive way for the dedicatory service. The historian, Willie Vee Canterbury gave some historical data. The keys to the new pastorium were then passed on to the pastor, W. D. Kirk. Kelly led in the dedication. Billy Ballard led in the dedicatory prayer.

"Open House" followed with the deacon wives and the decorating com-

mittee serving as 'tour guides.' The Acteens served refreshments at the close of the tour.

The new pastorium was planned by the committees for ministry and missions. The home is built to accommodate most any size family. It has a "prophet's room," furnished by the Baptist Women, for visiting ministers and other guests. It has a pastor's study and office furnished in memory of the Mack Baldwin family. The family room is spacious.

The construction was done mostly by the men, on their days off and at night. The decorating committee spent many hours and unnumbered trips to town coordinating the interior.



First Church, Tupelo broke ground May 18 for a \$1.5 million education building and sanctuary expansion. The church's two education buildings from the 1920's bit the dust in a two-day period in early March. Construction is scheduled to take one year. From left are: Arlon Spencer, chairman of deacons; Larry Rorie, building committee; Gayle Alexander, pastor; John Nail, financial committee; and Joe Gary, planning committee.

## Carey on Coast receives \$10,000 for art scholarships

GULFPORT, Miss. — William Carey College on the Coast has been awarded a \$10,000 endowment fund by the Mississippi Gulf Coast Craftsmen's Guild for the purpose of establishing an art scholarship to coastal-county students.

The guild, a juried group of craftsmen within a 50 mile radius of Biloxi, will contribute to the art scholarship until it reaches a total of \$10,000. The art scholarship offered for the 1986-87 school year begins at \$500.

However, when the endowment is completed it will provide a self-perpetuating scholarship of \$1,000 a year to a junior-year student majoring in art or crafts.

Joe Skelton, president of the guild, established the fund to help benefit the art department at Carey. In giving the current endowment, the guild will be able to be active in some of the college's innovations taking place in the art department. At present the art department has a photo lab, print room, three-dimensional design and interior design work areas. Charles

Ambrose, chairman of the art department, hopes to soon incorporate studios for weaving, pottery, jewelry, and computer graphics.

Carey now offers degrees in areas of drawing and painting, printmaking, interior design, commercial art, art administration, and biological illustration.

William Carey, a private Baptist college, recently received an endowment from Miss Sarah Gillespie of Hattiesburg for the Gillespie Chair of Art which honors her parents.



Pictured, (left to right) are Sammy Traxler, building committee chairman, Mrs. W. D. Kirk, W. D. Kirk, Jim Overby, long range planning committee chairman, Dean Dukes, chairmen of deacons and general contractor.

## Revival Dates

New Pleasantdale (Neshoba): June 8-13, Mon.-Fri. services, 11 a.m., 7:30 p.m.; Bill Stroud, pastor, South Side,

Jackson, Tenn., evangelist; Steve and Joan Johnson, music. E. C. Tucker, pastor.

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## Just for the Record



Washington County Association held its first annual GA Mother/Daughter Banquet, May 3, at Parkview Church, Greenville. Jan Cossitt and Patricia Simmons, WMU, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, Jackson, presented a special program on missions. There were 68 GAs, mothers and directors attending. Mrs. Carolyn Gilder is WMU director, and Mrs. Donna Germany is GA director. Roy Raddin is director of missions.



An anonymous gift totaling \$11,277.35 has paid off the indebtedness of Zion Hill Church's (Copiah County) Family Life Center building. The building was dedicated in March, 1983, and cost in excess of \$110,000.

A note-burning service was held on May 4, 1986, and five persons were baptized following the ceremony.

The building committee members participating were Jimmy Wooten, Dick Covington, T. D. Beall, and Jimmy Keys. Vernon Remington (deceased) was chairman of the committee during construction.

In the past three years the church has had 143 additions with 84 by baptism. The Sunday School enrollment has increased during the same period from 112 to more than 220. T. Frank Smith is pastor.

Parkhill Church, Jackson, will observe its 30th anniversary, June 8. Following the 11 a.m. worship service, a covered-dish dinner will be served in fellowship hall. James C. Edwards is pastor.

The youth of Linwood Church, (Neshoba) recently observed youth week. Special music was presented by David Collins, Missy Nicholson, Lawrence White and Jeremy Collins. Twenty one youths participated in the skit from the Equipping Youth Magazine.

Also in the evening service were Cappy James, Melissa Beckham and Nichole Eakes, sword drill participants. Jamie Meadows is youth director. Patricia Collins is youth leader. Johnny Collins is pastor.

Footprints in the sands of time are made of work shoes.



Acteans of First Church, Boyle recently held a Studiaet Recognition Service. Pictured (left to right) are queen with scepter Pam Weeks, Joshua Hill, sceptor-bearer; queen Kenna McClafflin, Lori Barnett, crown-bearer; queen Stacy Waldrup, Memorie McCreary, crown-bearer; queen Rhonda Hopper, Vicky Woljevach, crown-bearer; queen with scepter Amanda McClure, Amy Chennault, sceptor-bearer.



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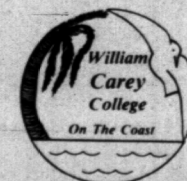
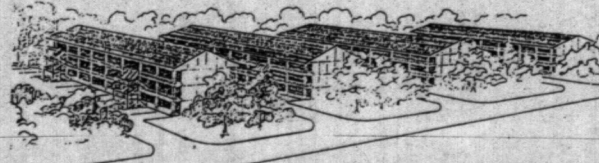
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### Party honors Leflore Mission Friends

Carolyn Jones and Debbie Ellis played host to the Mission Friends of Leflore County at a party held at The Learning Tree in Greenwood on May 17, honoring the children and their moms. Stephanie Watson, dressed as a clown, led the children in fun songs, accompanied by Stephanie Welch. The associational Mission Friend director, Carolyn Jones, gave a mission report on Hawaii, telling how the Baptist work began there with a Sunday School in the park on Sunday afternoons. About 40 attended.

### Stanley will allow challenges

(Continued from page 7)  
position, fine, we will rule that in order. But I will rule that it is out of order to propose a whole slate," Stanley told Baptist Press.

Stanley said he hopes the revision to Bylaw 16 passes, "not just for my sake, but for the sake of future presidents. The bylaw now is very unclear and what happened last year had never happened before. The change clarifies it for all of us. I think if everybody will just get honest, most

people will agree it is the fairest way to do it."

In reference to his presiding, Stanley was asked why he had appointed a Church of Christ minister as one of the parliamentarians.

"We were given a list of 1,300 people (from the American Institute of Parliamentarians) and there was simply no way to find out what denomination these people were, or even if they had a denomination," he said.



Hostesses for the Mission Friends party in Greenwood were Carolyn Jones, left, Leflore associational Mission Friends director, and Debbie Ellis, right, owner of The Learning Tree, for day care and kindergarten. The two are author and artist of the Lottie Moon Storybook.



This Mission Friend is enjoying "cooking dinner" during the party at the Learning Tree.



# THE VILLAGE VIEW



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## Gifts of Honor and Memory

MAY 5 - MAY 29, 1986

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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# Baptist Record

- Uniform: *A people gone astray*
- Bible Book: *The haunting power of old sins*
- Life and Work: *Believer's resurrection*

## A people gone astray

By Gus Merritt

Background scripture: Jeremiah 2-6

Focal Passages:

Jeremiah 2:1-3, 7-8, 11-13

This section of Jeremiah, chapters 2-6, is made up of oracles, prose and poetic material. It is divided into five sections. 1. God's people have been unfaithful (2:1-37). 2. The Lord calls the people to return to him (3:1-4:4). 3. If his people do not return, he will punish them by sending an enemy from the north (4:5-31). 4. The unfaithfulness of God's people and the warning again of the invasion (5:1-31). 5. The summation of the dreaded message of the entire section (6:1-30). The first division, 2:1-13, is made up of two oracles dealing with the same subject. This is the focal passage for the lesson.

Israel's former devotion (2:1-3). Verse one establishes the fact that this is a message from God and applies to

the entire section of chapters 2-6. Israel is compared to a bride in her relationship to God in the exodus from Egypt and the years in the wilderness as the "honeymoon" period. Of course, there were problems between God and Israel in the wilderness and Jeremiah was aware of these problems. However, the period in the wilderness was a unique relationship. The word translated kindness in verse two in the KJV could best be translated devotion. It denotes both God's faithfulness to the covenant with them and their faithfulness to him. In verse three, two words describe the special relationship between God and Israel. They were "holiness to the Lord" and "firstfruits of his increase." Firstfruits were the first fruits of the harvest with the greater increase of harvest to follow. God expected even great-things of

Israel to follow. To whom much is given, much is expected in return.

Israel's abuse of God's blessings (2:7-8). Once in the land of promise, Israel began to live for self and forget the covenant made with God. How easy to forget God when things are going well! Married couples usually have fewer marital problems as long as they are working together to face difficulties. However, when they reach a place of greater prosperity and security, they begin to have problems. They take each other for granted and communication breaks down. So it is with God and us.

When we reach a measure of success and things are going better, we forget God and tend to take his blessings for granted. This Israel did. The leaders of Israel were guilty of transgressing the law. The religious leaders and the temporal leaders alike became unfaithful to God. As the leaders went, so went the nation.

The word translated pastors in the

KJV is the word for shepherds and is referring to the temporal leaders. Even the prophets prophesied by Baal, the pagan male god. The worship of Baal and the female counterpart produced the most immoral and perverse sexual sins. The people became like the things they pursued. Corruption was found from top to bottom in the nation of Israel. Leaders have a great responsibility to lead in the right way and to lead unselfishly. God holds those in positions of leadership responsible for the direction of those they lead. It is well for all of us to remember previous life commitments from time to time and not deviate from them.

Israel's consequences for their infidelity (2:11-13). The word nation (v. 11) means a Gentile nation. Even a Gentile nation has not changed its god which is worthless while Israel is charged with changing its glory or the Lord. Even the heavens are called upon to be astounded at such a

horrible thing. That action should cause fear because it is blatant rebellion against the Lord and will bring his judgment. There is a spiritual axiom that judgment will follow unrepentant sin whether in the life of the believer or the unbeliever.

Theirs was a twofold sin. They had forsaken the fountain of living waters. In an arid land, water is a precious commodity. It is truly hard to understand why those in need of much water would turn from the source of abundant water to a lesser source. Jesus referred to himself as "the living water" (John 4:14). Israel had hewed for themselves cisterns. A cistern was a poor source of water in the first place. The water was stagnant and did not taste good. Things grew in it as well. These were even broken cisterns where the water leaked out. Israel here is the nation and the Northern Kingdom. It is dangerous to forsake the Lord!

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## The haunting power of old sins

By Billy McKay

Nehemiah 13:4-31

**Introduction.** Nehemiah is a book of history. However, let us not fail to see that it is "holy history" which is the divine activity of God in history. The chosen nation of Israel, with its temple at Jerusalem, was selected to send forth a clear message of salvation not only to its own national borders but to the ends of the earth. The temple ministry was a drama of redemption (cf. John 1:29; Rom. 3:21-26; I Cor. 5:7; 15:1-4; Heb. 10:1-18; I Pet. 1:18-19). The recurring sins of Israel were destroying her as God's missionary agent in the world. The same is true of the church today.

Four sins which continued to haunt the people of God concerned the following areas: I. The area of sanctification (13:4-9). The entire temple

with all its sacred vessels and furniture had been sanctified for the purposes of God. Even the priests were sanctified. The word "sanctified" can be translated by the words "holy," "set apart," or "different." The temple with its furnishings and priests was to be "different" in that it was separated or designated specifically for the purpose of telling the prophetic message of the Messiah through rituals.

The tabernacle, Solomon's temple, and Zerubbabel's temple were all dedicated by a sacrifice for the sacred purpose of proclaiming a clear message of the community Messiah (cf. Ex. 40:1-16; 2 Chron. 7:4-11; Ezra 6:15-18). The evil which Nehemiah found in 13:4-9 was that Eliashib the priest, who was in charge of the temple storerooms, had converted a storage room into a beautiful guest

room for Tobiah.

We know from Nehemiah 2:10-19, 4:3,7 and 6:1,12,17,19 that Tobiah the Ammonite had opposed Nehemiah in the wall-building at Jerusalem. Nehemiah was so angry that he threw out all of Tobiah's household goods and cleansed the area. He then brought back the temple furnishings which were to be used in connection with the various offerings portraying the coming Messiah's work. The truth was that Eliashib and Tobiah had no regard for the spiritual ministry of the temple.

II. The area of stewardship (13:10-14). The Levites and the singers had to work in the fields to support themselves. The house of God was forsaken (13:11). This meant that the prophetic message of salvation was not being proclaimed. In a few years the

400 years of silence between the Old and New Testaments would begin. This necessitated the tithes and offerings that the temple ministry could give its message of life and hope. Application: There have been almost 1,900 years of silence since the New Testament was complete. How much more do we need the faithful stewardship of Christians to support the gospel!

III. The area of sabbath rest (13:15-22). A full range of business activities was going on in 13:15-16 which included labor, transportation and marketing. The observance of sabbath rest was unique to Israel. Its purpose was two-fold: (1) It was to be a memorial to the Creator (cf. Ex. 20:8-11) and (2) It was to be a memorial to God as Redeemer (cf. Deut. 5:12-15). Since God is our Creator and Redeemer, this should leave no doubt as to whom we should serve and honor in this life (cf. I Cor. 10:31).

IV. The area of separation (13:23-31). The people of Israel were not to marry the pagans (cf. Ex. 34:11-31; Deut. 7:1-4). Their children were being taught the language of their mothers and therefore they could not learn the word of God (cf. 9:1-3; 13:1-3). In one generation they would be biblically illiterate. In 13:28 a priest had married a daughter of Sanballat, thus defiling the priesthood.

**Conclusion.** The haunting power of old sins in today's text dealt with the peoples' spiritual life (13:4-14), their business life (13:15-22), and their home life (13:23-31). They were not new sins but old ones which kept coming back with their haunting power. The result was that the missionary intent of Israel became endangered. The missionary intent of the church today is endangered when the people of God adopt the old sins of the flesh.

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## Believer's resurrection

By Peter McLeod

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

The old unmentionable was sex, but in today's world the new unmentionable is death.

In his play, "This Happy Breed," Noel Coward exposes our evasiveness regarding death when, in the third act, he has three characters discussing the demise of Mrs. Flint. Such terms as "passed on" are used to describe the woman's death and voices are raised as the discussion goes on. Finally, Frank says, "I'm not shouting about anything at all. I'm merely explaining to Sylvia that mother died. She didn't pass on, pass over, or pass out. She died!"

Like the characters in Coward's play, our evasiveness is rooted in the fact that death is considered to be public enemy number one.

Paul wrote to the Christians in Thessalonica to give them insight and encouragement about the death of fellow believers. He did this so they

would not be "uninformed" (v. 13) and so they could "comfort one another with these words" (v. 18). In this he is stating a basic principle of God's plan for believers — that it is not death for a Christian to die! How can this be?

(1) Death is temporary in nature. Peter Marshall told of a wee girl dying with leukemia. Her mother had done everything possible to keep her comfortable and used every means available to avoid discussion of her illness of pending death. The child caught her off-guard one day when she asked, "Mother, what does it feel like to die?" At a loss for words, the mother went into the hallway to compose herself and her thoughts.

When she returned, she sat on the bed and said, "Honey, you asked me what it's like to die. Do you remember those nights when you would fall asleep in the den but when you wakened in the morning you were in your own bedroom because your father had picked you up and carried you

there? You didn't even remember his doing it, did you? Well, that's what it feels like to die. You fall asleep in one room of God's house and you wake up in another room of his house."

That's beautiful and fitting explanation of what Paul states here in I Thessalonians and it's what Jesus taught in John 14:1-6. Death, for the believer, is simply passing from one room in God's house to another; from one dimension of existence to an even greater one with him. Death is not an end but a whole new beginning for as Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "... to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord" (I Cor. 5:8).

(2) Death will bring reunion.

The promise of Jesus in John 14:3 was, "I go to prepare a place for you and I will come again so that where I am there you may be also." This was affirmed by the angels in Acts 1:11 and Paul's writings ring with its truth, for our physical separation from Christ and those who have "fallen asleep" in him are temporary in nature. There will be a great reunion and it will be heralded by the "voice of the archangel and the

trumpet of God" (v. 16).

The period of separation can best be described as the experience of a man emigrating to America. He comes to the country alone, leaving family behind until he has a job and the resources for them to join him. When that day comes, he sends them tickets and awaits their arrival eagerly. If you've ever watched the reuniting of such families, you know the tears of joy and shouts of happiness which accompany their reunions. So will heaven be for the believer.

It is a source of comfort and anticipation for the Christian to know that death is not an ending for the best is yet to be. My friend, Frank Peerman, describes this feeling when he writes of the death of his son, "... After death, we will discover God in all his glory and we'll know the ultimate love beyond our wildest imagination. This is the glorious promise of the Christian faith. ... I know I shall continue to miss Jody for the remainder of my days ... but I can see him even now: his laughing, happy face, his youthful exuberance, his gentle compassion. I can see him so clearly: he seems to be saying, 'Good-

night, Dad.' And I reply, 'Good-night, Buddy, I love you. See you in the morning.'"

McLeod is pastor, First, Hattiesburg.

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